58. This statement does not show all the settlement work accomplished during the year, but only the progress made in the settlement of the old forest lands which had been gazetted under Section 34 of the Forest Act in March 1879.

4.—PRIVILEGES CONCEDED TO VILLAGERS.

59. Except in the Collectorates of Khándesh and Panch Mahál no changes have taken place during the year in the nature and extent of privileges previously conceded in reserved and protected forests, in all other Collectorates of the Northern Circle.

60. The code of privileges which was introduced last year in the Khándesh Collectorate under the authority of Government Resolution No. 7197, dated 22nd October 1887, was subjected to reconsideration by a Committee of local Revenue and Forest Officers, which met at Dhulia during the rains of 1888, and revisionary proposals were made to Government, which were sanctioned in Government Resolution No. 243, dated 11th January 1889, in the Revenue Department. The modifications thus effected are :—

(1*st.*) A rule that no privileged person shall be allowed to exercise his privileges by proxy, *viz.*, to send another person into the forests to take or enjoy that which has been conceded to him personally.

(2*nd.*) Interpretation given to the term "an inhabitant of a forest village" that it shall mean a permanent resident of the forest village.

(3*rd.*) Of minor forest produce, fruits of mango trees and Rosha grass are not at the disposal of privilege-holders but are reserved to Government.

(4*th.*) Four kinds of trees were added to the list of reserved trees, *viz.* Kalamb (*Nauclea parvifolia*), Háladvan (*Nauclea cordifolia*), Bor (*Zizyphus jujuba*), and Temru (*Diospyros montana*).

(5*th.*) An enhanced scale of grazing fees was introduced for professional graziers at the following rates :—

	Rs.	a.	p.
Cows and bullocks	0	6	0
Buffaloes	0	8	0
Calves under 1½ years	0	2	0
Sheep	0	1	0
Goats	0	4	0
Ponies, horses and donkeys ...	0	4	0

61. In the Panch Mahál Collectorate the extensive and, from a forestry point of view, destructive privileges which had been provisionally conceded in respect of the forest reservations in the Dohad and Jhálod Tálukás were confirmed during the year under the authority of Government Resolutions Nos. 332 and 815, dated 14th January and 1st February 1889. These privileges are—

(1.) *Grazing.*—Free for agricultural cattle.

(2.) *Grass-cutting.*—Free.

(3.) *Thorns and leaves.*—Free.

(4.) *Minor forest produce.*—Free, including mhowra.

(5.) *Dead wood*—Head-loads free.

(6.) *Green wood.*—To cut all but 17 kinds of reserved trees for *bonâ-fide* domestic and agricultural purposes, when the wood is not obtainable elsewhere.

(7.) *Earth and Kankar.*—Free for domestic and agricultural purposes.

62. The forests of Jhálod and Dohad Ranges occupy the sides and tops of low hills where the ground is very rough, broken and steep, and where cultivation cannot, under any devices, find a permanent abiding place. The uplands and drainage slopes, when covered by dense forest growth, serve as natural reservoirs

for catching, impounding and distributing the rain water which falls upon them and supplying moisture to, and providing for, the natural irrigation of the cultivation down below in the plains. So long as these forests are well preserved they may be regarded as a Famine Insurance Fund, for they will provide fodder when there is no grass in the country and all outside the forests is parched and brown, and they will feed the subterranean arteries of natural irrigation, supplying water to wells for garden cultivation, &c., and will distribute water and moisture in other ways for the benefit of agriculture, at times when the rains are holding off. But when forests are exposed to the destruction of all but 17 kinds of trees, some of which are scarce, by villagers under no professional regulation, it follows that large blanks are created inside the forests in places where the reserved trees are few in number or sparsely represented, and that the latter are injured by sudden exposure to side light and to the action of winds, &c. Light is the deity trees worship, to which they turn in silent adoration; when trees are growing in close association, protecting each other in the healthy race towards the light overhead, clean cylindrical stems are produced, and good valuable timber, poles, &c., result. Forests into which a population is permitted to come and go at pleasure, with wood-cutting implements, fire, &c., to cut and take timber and other forest produce, are obviously difficult of protection against conflagrations and are liable to deterioration rather than improvement in respect of the trees which are forbidden to be cut. Forests thus circumstanced are upon the high road to utter destruction, and are a long way removed from the path to improvement. It is invariably urged in support of concessions and of free gifts of public forest property that liberal treatment in the supply of the domestic wants of the poor people inhabiting forest villages has always been considered necessary as an incentive to enlisting their co-operation in forest conservancy. This may be a commendable truism, but it depends upon the nature and extent of the "liberal treatment" as to whether the object is gained or not; when the treatment means a privilege of cutting and removing the trees, the presence of which in natural beauty and vigour is the symbol of forest conservancy, then it goes without saying that the treatment is radically wrong, for it can by no contrivances secure that object for the extinction of which all its energies are co-operating. A free gift to poor forest villagers of the whole, or of a share, of the actual annual produce of forests exploited under the due and regular working of Forestry becomes a simple financial question, and does not affect the well being of the forests themselves from which the timber, &c., may be removed; and liberal treatment of this description may possibly enlist sympathy and assistance in forest conservancy. It is not the revenue, or the interest legitimately accruing from the forest, to the sacrifice of which the Forest Officer so strongly objects, although his duty compels him to secure to the general revenues of the State, for the public good, the maximum interest the forests in his care and under his professional management are capable of yielding. It is the destructive attacks made upon the capital, dissipating the latter, and rendering the continuance of interest impossible, which the Forest Officer, from his professional education, perceives, when it is not apparent to the uninitiated, and which he finds so sore a burden n his conscience.

63. The expenditure incurred upon the formation and constitution of reserved and protected forests in the Northern Circle during the year has amounted to Rs. 90,053-12-2, distributed thus :—

	Rs.	a.	p.
(1) Salaries and travelling allowances not charged against the Forest Department	33,990	2	1
(2) Salaries and travelling allowances of establishments employed under the Forest Settlement Officers and charged in the forest accounts, and the contingent expenditure of the latter... ...	12,102	0	1
(3) Demarcation of forest boundaries upon the ground by the construction of special forest boundary-marks	11,948	5	6
(4) Compensation for land and rights	32,013	4	6
Total ...	90,053	12	2